

# W5YI

America's Oldest Ham Radio Newsletter

## REPORT

Up to the minute news from the world of amateur radio, personal computing and emerging electronics. While no guarantee is made, information is from sources we believe to be reliable.

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February 1, 1999

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## FCC Recognition of NFCC-Certified Coordinators Sought!

*"The National Frequency Coordinator's Council (NFCC) is a District of Columbia non-profit corporation, the membership of which is composed of delegates from recognized frequency coordinators in the United States. The purpose of which the corporation is organized is to establish recognition of Amateur Radio frequency coordination by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the American Radio Relay League, Inc. (ARRL) and all Amateur Radio licensees." (Excerpted from draft petition)*

The National Frequency Coordinators Council circulated a draft of a *Petition for Rule Making* to the nation's Amateur Service coordinators during early January. NFCC President Dick Isely W9GIG said the draft "...is the culmination of some three years of countless hours of work by many persons both within the NFCC and the ARRL leadership."

Isely summed up the purpose of the petition by declaring that "When all the legalese, complicated phrases, enumerated history, references and appendices are stripped away, this is a request for concrete recognition of Amateur Radio Frequency Coordination and Coordinators."

He added that was the goal that was stated in the St. Charles, MO coordinators October 1995 meeting. The petition maintains its purpose is "...to strengthen and enhance volunteer frequency coordination in the Amateur Service, thus to further increase and improve the self regulatory character of the Service."

Even though frequency coordination is not part of the Commission's planned restructuring of the Amateur Service, the ARRL/NFCC draft document said it presents "...a window of political opportunity." Isely said he thought "...the atmosphere within the Commission is again favorable to our goal."

The draft petition was prepared by ARRL general counsel, Chris Imlay W3KD.

We understand that League Vice Presidents Steve Mendelsohn W2ML and Hugh Turnbull W3ABC were the ARRL leadership that participated in the development of the draft petition. The conclusion that one would make was that the initiative did indeed have – at least partial – League support. The draft is 16 (single-spaced) pages long.

"Up until a couple of months ago, we assumed that the NFCC was going to be the sole petitioner on this issue of coordination and coordinator recognition within FCC Part 97," Isely commented in the draft's cover letter dated January 9<sup>th</sup>. "This draft reflects ARRL input," he said. "We believe the ARRL board will approve co-sponsorship of this petition at its next meeting the weekend of January 15/16. (See late bulletin on page 3) Our chances of FCC approval are improved several times over by having the ARRL as a joint petitioner."

### Frequency coordination in the Amateur Service

In 1972 (Docket 18803) rules were adopted to provide for the licensing of repeater stations. But the FCC ceased licensing repeater stations in 1977. "The Commission largely held, in view of intervening deregulation between 1972 and 1977 that voluntary coordination had replaced Commission regulation as the principal means of insuring compatibility between and among repeater licensees," the draft reads.



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Actually, the Commission did set aside all WR-by-3 call signs for repeater stations but never implemented them. As a result, repeater stations have not been licensed since 1978 when the FCC adopted the new Group call sign system. All secondary call signs were discontinued at the same time. Up until then, an amateur could apply for an additional call sign if they had another fixed transmitter location.

"The League has maintained for almost 20 years as its basic policy that amateur radio frequency/repeater coordination and database management in the VHF, UHF and microwave frequencies is a local matter, best left to local and regional groups."

The draft document claims "It has not been, and is not, the intention of the League to become involved in repeater coordination matters at the local level. Rather the League's function has been to act as a facilitator, and to assist volunteer frequency coordinators in the Amateur Service in addressing issues which clearly and adversely impact amateur radio at the national level."

There has, however, been several instances of conflicts and competing claims as to who was the 'recognized' frequency coordinator in a given area. The ARRL is concerned because it publishes a repeater directory which is considered the prime resource listing of both coordinators and coordinated repeater stations. "These listings presuppose a means of identification of the coordinator. ...Resolution of interference occurring between or among two or more repeaters requires the same determination."

In support of a new regulatory approach, the ARRL/NFCC draft document argues:

- 1.) Frequency coordination is no longer an organizational luxury in terms of avoiding interference between repeaters, and among users of shared spectrum.
- 2.) There is an inherent, basic philosophical conflict between the FCC's firm policy that no amateur has any claim to specific frequencies, and the operation of repeaters and other point to multipoint systems on dedicated channels, (especially the concept of priorities between coordinated and non-coordinated repeaters on co- or adjacent channels.)
- 3.) There is an expectation that anyone who wants a repeater is entitled to establish one, despite low predicted loading of existing or proposed individual repeaters by individual users.
- 4.) Crowded band conditions indicate that there is a limit to the number of repeaters (assuming traditional operating parameters and typical wide area coverage) that can be placed on the air without interference; and
- 5.) There is not a sense of necessary participation in coordination among digital and other non-repeater users as there is among repeater users, and many coordinators confine their interests and coordination activities to voice repeater operations.

Since "...the identification of a coordinator is a per-

son recognized by licensees who are eligible to be repeater licensees in a given area... identification is not practically workable, and it in fact has not worked. ... Disputes over the identity of a frequency coordinator are not at all uncommon... There is a need to establish standardized coordination practices..." the document reads.

"It is time to revisit the issue of requiring coordination for amateur repeater and auxiliary stations, and the NFCC has a comprehensive plan to do so. ...what is required is the acknowledgment of the NFCC as the Commission's single point of contact with the Commission for coordination purposes; the recognition of its established standards for identification and succession of coordinators; its standards for coordination practices; and its policies and procedures for informal dispute resolution in the private sector."

The ARRL/NFCC draft petition asked that the following rules be amended or adopted:

**Section 97.3 - Frequency coordinator.** A certified entity which coordinates frequencies and associated technical and operating parameters for auxiliary and repeater facilities within a geographic area, in accordance with policies, procedures and standards for frequency coordination recognized by the National Frequency Coordinator's Council.

**National Frequency Coordinator's Council.** A non-profit entity, the membership of which is composed of representatives of accredited amateur radio frequency coordination entities, which establishes and administers standards and procedures for frequency coordination and the certification of frequency coordinators.

**Frequency Coordination.** A set of technical operating parameters, including transmit and receive frequencies, issued by a frequency coordinator to operators of auxiliary or repeater facilities, in order to avoid or minimize potential interference to and from operation of other stations.

**Section 97.101(e)** - All repeater and auxiliary facilities must be coordinated.

**Section 97.201(c)** - Where the transmissions of an auxiliary station interfere with the operation of another auxiliary or repeater facility, the licensees are equally responsible for resolving the interference.

**Section 97.205(c)** - Where the transmissions of a repeater station interfere with the operation of another repeater or auxiliary facility, the licensees are equally responsible for resolving the interference.

(New) - **Subpart G - Frequency Coordination.**

**Section 97.601 - Frequency Coordinator Requirements and Qualifications.**

- (a) No organization or individual may serve as a coordinator unless certified by the National Frequency Coordinator's Council.
- (b) A coordinator may be an individual, public or private organization. All persons serving as coordinators, whether individually, or as members of an organization, shall have their principal residence within the geographic area



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of service of the coordinator, be at least 18 years of age and hold a Technician or higher class license.

- (c) No person may serve as a frequency coordinator if that person's amateur station license or amateur operator license has ever been revoked or suspended.
- (d) There shall be only one frequency coordinator for each amateur service frequency subband within each geographical area. The same coordinator may provide coordination service for more than one frequency band in a geographical area.

## Section 97.603 - Frequency Coordinator duties.

- (a) A frequency coordinator shall coordinate transmit/receive frequencies and associated technical and operating parameters for auxiliary and repeater facilities in accordance with standard procedures adopted by the National Frequency Coordinator's Council.
- (b) A coordinator must make the following information available to all licensees of coordinated stations and to those requesting coordination of new or modified stations.
  - (1) A description of the geographical area and the frequency bands for which it performs coordination.
  - (2) The local or regional band plan(s) for each amateur frequency band within which it provides frequency coordination.
  - (3) A description of the process by which frequency coordination may be requested and obtained, and any information required from the amateur licensee. Such description shall include identification of all documents and/or information which may be required.
  - (4) A description of the process by which coordination decisions may be reconsidered or reviewed, and the subsequent resolution procedures which will be followed.
- (c) If, due to the number of repeater or auxiliary stations, or other fixed-frequency amateur stations in a particular subband in a particular geographical area, it is not possible to coordinate a new or modified repeater or auxiliary station on any frequency or frequency pair in the band of choice without predicted harmful interference, the coordinator shall recommend an alternative frequency band for use by that amateur licensee.

**Late Bulletin:** According to a January 18th ARRL News Bulletin: Meeting in Houston, Texas, January 15 and 16:

"The Board reviewed a draft petition for rule making for possible joint submission with the *National Frequency Coordinators' Council* (NFCC), to seek rules requiring that all repeater and auxiliary facilities must be frequency coordinated. A majority of the Board did not find that there was compelling evidence warranting a move beyond the existing rules at this time, but the NFCC was invited to revisit the matter."

The following letters were exchanged between the ARRL Board and the NFCC:

January 17, 1999

George R. Isely, W9GIG, President, NFCC

Dear Dick,

Thank you for consulting the ARRL Board, on behalf of the NFCC, with regard to a draft petition for FCC rule making proposing that the coordination of repeater and auxiliary operation be made mandatory. Such consultation is very much in the spirit of the memorandum of understanding between our two organizations. The Board devoted a portion of its Annual Meeting in Houston, January 15-16, to a discussion of the draft petition.

Board members were especially interested in the question of why mandatory coordination would be in the best interests of Amateur Radio at this time. I must report to you that a majority of the Board did not find compelling evidence, in the material submitted to them for consideration, that a move beyond the existing rules is warranted at this time. The existing rules provide reasonable priority for coordinated repeaters, and some Board members cited cases in which FCC personnel have used those rules to resolve interference problems between repeaters. With the Commission's renewed commitment to enforcement of the amateur rules, there is reason to believe that future cases of harmful interference from uncoordinated repeaters can be effectively addressed in the same way.

I should emphasize that the Board has not adopted a philosophical position opposing mandatory coordination. Board members simply have concluded that a compelling argument in support of mandatory coordination has not been offered. If the NFCC wishes to make the case for mandatory coordination, and as long as the interests of all licensees are taken into account, I believe you will find the Board to be quite willing to listen. 73,

Sincerely,

Rod Stafford, W6ROD - President, ARRL

January 18, 1999

Rodney J. Stafford, W6ROD - President, ARRL

Dear Rod,

I am quite disappointed to learn that the ARRL Board of Directors decided to not support the Proposal for Rule Making that was drafted in Chris Imlay's office on December 12th. But I think I can understand why this happened.

After over three years of work and delay on this project, there is some irony in the fact that we were, at the end, hasty in getting our proposal to the ARRL board. But in all fairness, I have to say that when we saw Chris' first "straw man" draft constructed to include the ARRL as a joint petitioner, the impression was given that the ARRL board looked favorably on this project. And in this atmosphere, we obviously did not do all of our homework with the individual directors.

On behalf of the NFCC, I thank you and the board for the support that has been given to our organization. I also want to thank Chris Imlay for the time he has spent on our behalf - not only on the PRM but also for the hours he spent on our founding paperwork and documents.

I think it's fair to say this PRM is not a dead issue for the NFCC. As soon as emotions have settled a bit, we will press on. I am not now in a position to state what direction the NFCC will take on this issue. I personally think we will have our best chance of success with the FCC, if this PRM is filed as a joint petition. But this decision is up to the NFCC - and depending on the changes that might be made to the PRM draft, another vote of our members. 73 -

George R. Isely, W9GIG  
President, NFCC



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## AMERICAN RADIO RELAY LEAGUE FILES REPLY COMMENTS ON AMATEUR RESTRUCTURING

The American Radio Relay League has filed Reply Comments on WT Docket No. 98-143, the FCC's proposal to restructure the Amateur Service. Some excerpts.

1.) The comments creatively addressed revision of the licensing structure, and expressed overall a good degree of unanimity on one main point: that the current structure is overly cumbersome and requires simplification. The Commission can, on this record, and it should, confidently proceed to adopt a restructuring plan which

- (a) reduces the number of license classes by elimination of the Novice and Technician Plus license classes;
- (b) revises the high-frequency subband allocations among the remaining license classes to provide further self-training incentives; and
- (c) revises the nature of the written and telegraphy requirements to make them more relevant to modern amateur radio, and more comprehensive, though not more difficult.

2.) The comments were varied and diverse. They ranged from having one license class [*proposed by Wayne Green of 73 Magazine*] to five license classes [*QCWA's Marconi Chapter 138*]. They ranged from suggesting 100 questions for the Extra Class license written examination [*National Conference of VECs*] to a suggestion of a basic amateur permit with no examination whatsoever [*CQ Communications, Inc.*]. Given this wide variation in proposals or license restructuring, and the different philosophical premises that underlie each, the Commission's job now is to evaluate them and to formulate a restructuring plan that makes sense for the years to come.

3.) ...it is apparent that this proceeding should be resolved quickly. There is at present a slowdown in amateur radio growth, and a reduction in the number of examinations administered for new and upgraded licenses over the historically high levels of just a few years ago. The League believes that simplification of the licensing and examination structure will contribute to restoring an accelerated level of growth in the number of licensees, and the self-training that accompanies license upgrades.

4.) There was ...a preference for either three or four license classes, and very few commenters ...supported more than four or fewer than three. ...there is good and sufficient reason for retaining four license classes rather than three, regardless of the configuration of telegraphy examination elements. There is simply too much material to be tested on in the Amateur Service to have only three written examinations

(5.) There is probably the least degree of unanimity reflected in the comments as to what constitutes the proper

emphasis on Morse telegraphy as a licensing requirement. There are those who suggest that the Commission should immediately implement the most minimal telegraphy requirement permitted by the ITU Radio Regulations. These commenters, including No-Code International, suggest that there is no place for telegraphy as a licensing requirement in modern Amateur Radio. On the other side are, for example, the comments of the Winston County Amateur Radio Club, which suggest preserving three classes of amateur radio telegraphy examination just as they are, urging the Commission not to lower standards of operating skills. ...it would appear that the majority of the comments agree that there is currently an over-emphasis on telegraphy as an examination requirement.

6.) The League's restructuring proposal reduces the telegraphy speeds to 5 and 12 WPM. This is preferable to a single 5WPM element because it offers a reasonably achievable incentive to increase operating proficiency at the Advanced class level, and at the same time eliminate any significant disincentive to upgrade from a Technician class license to a General class license. If all amateur operating privileges are available to General class licensees with only a 5 WPM telegraphy examination ...the incentive to abuse the physician's exemption procedure as a means of avoiding the General class telegraphy examination is greatly reduced....

7.) The League's proposed 12 WPM speed is equivalent to the highest telegraphy speed requirement for full-privilege licenses in many other countries especially in Europe... this is a reasonable level of proficiency for anyone seeking full amateur privileges.... The League suggests that telegraphy requirements in excess of the 12 WPM level constitute, today, and for the future, an over-emphasis on telegraphy as an examination requirement.

8.) The international [telegraphy] requirement is obviously self-effectuated... One counter argument was that Technician licensees could use machine-sent and received telegraphy, thus sidestepping the self-proving nature of the telegraphy ability demonstration and violating the spirit of the international regulation. The Commission might simply mandate that Technicians must manually send and receive telegraphy on the General class HF subbands, if in the opinion of the Commission, the magnitude of the concern warrants such.

9.) The comments overall support the League's proposal to reform the present HF subbands on which Novice and Technician Plus licensees operate. It is a plan which allows the Commission to offer additional operating privileges to each remaining class, as an incentive to licensees to upgrade their amateur license class. Eliminating the 13 and 20 WPM telegraphy examinations, without a substitute in written examinations as proposed by the League, is ill-advised, and is unnecessary as a solution to any identified regulatory goal or issue.



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■ You can forget about dialing the "10-10" phone number prefix with **Uniden America Corp.'s new high tech "Long Distance Manager"** cordless telephone. It seeks out the lowest long distance rate within 50 milliseconds after you dial the number. And the phone cost is under \$50. The Uniden telephone averages a long distance cost rate of between 7¢ and 8¢ a minute.

■ **A music web site, MP3.com has received \$11 million in start-up funding** from two venture capital groups. One of them, Sequoia Capital has backed such well-known companies as Cisco Systems and Yahoo.

MP3.com has more than 10,000 songs from about 4,000 artists available in MP3 – a compressed format that allows users to download free, CD-quality (60 to 16,000 Hz) music. As mentioned in our last newsletter, the recording industry vehemently opposes MP3 which they believe allows PC users to make pirated copies of music CDs.

The industry is trying to develop a new secure standard to ensure that royalties are paid but it looks like MP3 is now the de facto standard. You can download a shareware player (WinAmp) at [www.MP3.com](http://www.MP3.com) which works VERY well. (We are listening to MP3 music in the background as we write this newsletter.)

■ **America OnLine has forged a multi-year alliance with Bell Atlantic to provide high "InfoSpeed" DSL access** to AOL subscribers over BA phone lines. Cost will be about \$20.00 extra a month or about the same rate charged by cable companies for high speed cable modem Internet access.

DSL, or Digital Subscriber Line, is the phone company's answer to high speed Internet service. Although some are faster, as a rule DSL downstream's at about 1.5 megabits/sec over copper lines – thirty to fifty times faster than a standard modem. (Upstream – back to the Internet – is much slower.)

The two wire copper phone line from a telephone company's central office to a customer's location is often referred to as "the last mile." This "last mile" of copper wiring has long been the bottleneck to providing fast data services to homes and businesses.

Using coaxial cabling, cable modems are generally (but not always) faster than DSL and AOL is pressuring the FCC and local authorities to require cable operators to open their networks to them. Another advantage of cable modems is that you can

also use them to facilitate long distance (or local) phone calling over the Internet.

DSL can theoretically transmit at 6 Mbps speed and cable modem at 30 Mbps. The "real world" transmission speed is less – MUCH less – since speed is really a factor of how fast hardware, web servers and the network can handle information.

■ **Who's on first? -- Not to be outdone, AOL competitor "AtHome" (or "@Home", as they are known) the high speed Internet cable service has acquired Excite** in a stock deal worth \$6.7 billion. Excite is the number two on-line search engine behind Yahoo.

With a market capitalization of \$11.7 billion, the AtHome service is mostly owned by the nation's largest cable TV operator, TCI which was recently bought by AT&T. AtHome, paid 57% more for Excite than its market value.

We also heard that AtHome would be buying AT&T's WorldNet, the number 2 online dial-up service with 1.3 million residential customers for \$1 billion in stock once the TCI deal went through. Confused? So are we!

The bottom line is that AT&T intends to be a VERY big player on the Internet. Five years from now, the AtHome network plans to be the high-speed cable version of America Online

■ **Horse racing for the Information Age – Personal off track betting parlor in your home** – YouBet.com is a publicly-owned off track online live horse racing and real-time wagering site based in Los Angeles. The first and only interactive online horse racing network in the United States, YouBet offers online betting at 16 tracks across the U.S. ...including every track in Louisiana. (They added Delta Downs in Louisiana just last week which races from Jan. 14 to April 11.)

YouBet launched its service six months ago. You use special downloaded software to reach their network. Is it legal? They say it is since You Bet does not actually place or accept wagers. They only provide the network which transmits the wagering data for its member tracks. And the laws that apply to using the telephone to place wagers don't apply to the Web.

Youbet.com derives its revenues through subscription fees, information sales (tip sheets?) and a percentage of every wager made through its network. You transfer funds to YouBet's "agent" via a credit card. <<http://www.youbet.com>>

■ **The danger to aircraft safety due to the Y2K millennium bug** has made

some airlines consider grounding all flights on 31 December. But they will be flying in China! The Chinese *Ministry of Information Industries* has ruled that the heads of all airlines must be in the air on 1 January 2000. Sort of an added incentive to get all the potential problems cleared up.

■ **"You've got [Pocket] Mail"** – Both Sharp Electronics and JVC have small palm-sized devices with acoustic modems that can deliver your e-mail for \$9.95 a month when you call an '800' number. You simply hold the "PocketMail" device next to a telephone ear/mouthpiece to download or upload messages from your @pocketmail account or to toll existing e-mail accounts. A beep informs you when you are finished, and a blinking LED notifies you that you have new mail. The gadget has a small keyboard and a scrolling 8 line by 40 character display. (JVC Portable E-Mail: \$99; Sharp TeleMail: \$150.) PocketMail was developed by PocketScience, Inc., of Santa Clara, CA

■ **There will be no independent counsel appointed to investigate charges that money influenced the FCC's decision to move to its new headquarters in The Portals.** A congressional report submitted to Attorney General Janet Reno requested the independent counsel, because of the allegation that President Clinton's 1996 campaign manager Peter Knight received a \$1 million payment as a contingency fee from developer Franklin Haney. The fee allegedly ensured that Knight would use his influence to convince the FCC to move its headquarters to The Portals development. Justice said Knight's denial of receiving a contingency fee did not amount to perjury before a House subcommittee. However, Haney currently is under indictment by the Justice Department for 42 counts of campaign finance violations. [Reported by Newsbytes.]

■ **In remarks given at its new headquarters located at The Portals building in southwest Washington, D.C., FCC Chairman Bill Kennard laid out his 1999 Agenda for the FCC.**

He started by saying that every major economic indicator in every sector of the communications industry was up in 1998: job growth, revenue, investment, stock values.

"Perhaps the most dramatic recent indication of this is the excitement during the holidays about electronic commerce," Kennard said. "Almost 9 million families shopped on-line for gifts, almost double the amount from the year before. They were joined on-line by the 22 million households



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who use the Internet for news, for school-work, or to just keep up with family and friends. Its one reason why we have seen the remarkable rally in Internet-related stocks."

"And the excitement is not just on the Internet. Last year, 61 million Americans had a cellular phone, and because of competition, these phones were of a higher quality and bills were more than 50% lower than a decade ago."

"It was a year in which we saw the price of long distance minutes plummet, as consumers were bombarded with advertising: ten cents a minute, then nine cents a minute; then five cents a minute. Because of competition, long distance rates are the lowest in history."

"Our communications system is the envy of the world. Its miraculous by comparison to many other countries. It happened because we have the right statutory and regulatory model in this country."

"Looking forward to 1999, the challenge before this Commission is clear: to promote competition, to foster new technologies, to protect consumers, and to ensure that all Americans have access to the wonders of the communications revolution. ...Our agenda for this year is a full one. And it is an important one. Information technologies are transforming our economy."

Chairman Kennard said the major initiatives for 1999 are "...all focused on our core goals to promote competition, to foster new technologies, to protect consumers, and to ensure that all Americans become full participants in the richness of the Information Age."

"We will ensure that all Americans -- no matter where they live, what they look like, what their age, or what special needs they have -- have access to new technologies to take advantage of the enormous opportunity created by the communications revolution."

One of Kennard's 1999 initiatives is to promote the development and deployment of high-speed Internet connections to all Americans. An in response to appeals from microbroadcasting interests, Kennard said the FCC would be "...opening low-power radio frequencies for local use and promoting the participation of people of all backgrounds in broadcasting and other communications media."

■ **FCC to Propose New Low Power Radio Service** - Will "Microbroadcasting" be legalized? On the agenda for the January 28, 1999 public meeting of the Federal Communications Commission is Mass

Media Item 8, "Creation of a Low Power Radio Service."

This will be the first new free, over-the-air radio broadcasting service the FCC has proposed to create in decades (except for the so-called "Special Broadcasting Service" at 698-806 MHz on which the agency has taken no recent action).

The FCC based its proposal on several petitions for rulemaking that called for low power FM services. Importantly, none of the proposals contemplated use of modern digital technologies that could accommodate large numbers of stations.

The item is a proposal (a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking or NPRM*) and should actually contain specific technical and operational rules for the new service.

Important questions surrounding the proposal include:

- Does it accommodate large numbers of new stations?
- Does it provide for commercial stations, or noncommercial only?
- Will the FCC auction licenses?

Early indications are that this will be noncommercial only and only a few stations in each area will be permitted. I have also heard that any consideration of new technologies has been dropped from the NPRM. If commercial stations were permitted then auctions would have to be held if there were mutually exclusive applications, unless other means (other than lotteries) were used to decide who gets a license.

The FCC will transmit the meeting live over the Web; see the FCC web page for information. The Commission will host a press conference immediately after the meeting. We will have one of our people at the FCC meeting and will report on what we find out in the next issue. It will be held in the Commission's new meeting room at "The Portals."

■ **The FCC's new ham radio rules enforcer, Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH**, is turning up -- on the air -- to confront those who the agency considers to be blatant offenders.

Hollingsworth showed up unexpectedly on 3.894 MHz on Wednesday, January 13th. This frequency is considered to be one of a number of hot spots that the rest of the ham community wants cooled down. Hollingsworth said he broke in on an argument that was growing increasingly nasty in an effort to settle things down. He then remained on frequency to discuss FCC enforcement with those hams who were interested.

But not everyone wanted to hear what

he had to say. According to reports on the Internet newsgroups, there was a serious effort made by some radio operators to silence K4ZDH. He was jammed and some high power stations made rude and lewd comments while Hollingsworth was on the air.

None the less, Hollingsworth told those involved in the 75 meter contact to keep in touch with him if they have enforcement problems and gave out a phone number and e-mail address where he can be reached. To contact Hollingsworth with enforcement write to rholling@fcc.gov or call 717-338-2502.

And on another front, Hollingsworth has also made good on his well publicized promise. This, to issue the most egregious offenders a final warning to clean up their act. Those letters went out on January 8<sup>th</sup>. [Newsline via Internet and listener reports]

■ **In an austerity move, the ARRL has dropped the Spring VHF/UHF sprints.** These mini-contests are traditionally held during April and May. ARRL Contest Branch Manager Dan Henderson, N1ND, cites a lack of participation for the change.

He says that in 1998 only 200 people submitted logs and those submitted were spread across the seven frequency bands covered by the Sprints. With few people taking part, the sprints are just too expensive to subsidize in these tight economic times.

■ **CQ-VHF magazine announced the introduction of three VHF "Activity Weekends"** in the spring of 1999. These weekend-length events are intended to promote activity on the VHF and UHF bands during the normally-slow spring season, and to generate interest in VHF contesting among a wide variety of ham radio operators.

There will be three separate mode-based events, one each month during March, April and May. First up is the CQ VHF "FM Activity Weekend" on March 19-21, followed by the "Weak Signal Activity Weekend" for operating SSB, CW, and narrow-band digital modes, on April 23-25, and closing with the "Specialty Modes Weekend" on May 21-23. The latter event will be for packet and other digital modes (except those that qualify for the weak-signal weekend), amateur television, etc. All bands above 30 MHz may be used for the event, which will start at 600 p.m. local time on Friday, and run through local midnight on Sunday.

Details and complete rules will appear in the March, 1999, issue of CQ VHF, available on newsstands in mid-February.



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## 1999 Annual Meeting of the ARRL Board of Directors

...was held at the Houston Airport Marriott Hotel, Intercontinental Airport, Houston, Texas, on Friday, January 15, and Saturday, January 16, 1999. The meeting, attended by the various Directors, Officers and staff members, was chaired by President Rodney J. Stafford, W6ROD. Also present as a guest was Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) President Patrick Doherty, VE3PD who conveyed the greetings of the Radio Amateurs of Canada and thanked the Board for its continuing support.

(1) A moment of silence was held for former Northwestern Division Director Mary Lou Brown, NM7N (who died while in office, December 3, 1998) and other Radio Amateurs who have passed away since the previous Board meeting.

(2) Central Division Director Edmond A. Metzger, W9PRN reported that ARRL Foundation reached the \$2 million mark in assets for the first time in its history, thanks in part to a large donation.

(3) Kay Craigie, WT3P, Frank Fallon, N2FF, Fried Heyn, WA6WZO, and Tod Olson, KØTO were elected members of the Executive Committee for one-year terms. Greg Milnes, W7AGQ, John C. Kanode, N4MM K, and Eugene Hastings, W1VRK, were elected as Directors of the ARRL Foundation for three-year terms.

(4) President Stafford discussed the state of Amateur Radio and his perceptions of the need to inject stimulating, new aspects of the radio art, especially technology. A three-point strategy for meeting this need was introduced. Mr. Stafford also addressed declining membership, the need to study the basis for the decline and to identify enhanced membership benefits to stem it. His report also addressed possible changes to the League's strategic planning processes in light of recent experience.

VP Steve Mendelsohn W2ML recommended that the organization should prioritize membership development, and position the League's products and services so as to attract young people. VP Joel Harrison, W5ZN commented on the need to focus efforts on stemming the membership decline as a major organizational objective. Mr. Harrison called for a full effort to win FCC approval of the League's license restructuring proposals.

(5) Chief Financial Officer Barry Shelley, N1VXY addressed the League's financial position at year-end, which is generally sound. He expressed concern about the general contraction in Amateur Radio as indicated by fewer new licensees and turmoil in the industry. For ARRL, this has resulted in fewer members and reductions in revenues from sales of publications and advertising, as well as member dues.

(6) General Counsel Chris Imlay W3KD noted that the experimental station license sought by the ARRL for the 5 MHz band study had just been issued by the FCC. Mr. Imlay also commented on the striking renewal of FCC enforcement activity; FCC restructuring and staffing; and the League's reply comments and strategies undertaken in the FCC's biennial review proceeding.

(7) Steve Mansfield, N1MZA as Manager of Legislative and Public Affairs, supplemented his written report with comments on the climate on Capitol Hill with the presidential impeachment trial underway, and briefly reported on the outcome of bills of

ARRL interest considered in the previous 105<sup>th</sup> Congress. Mr. Mansfield also reviewed proposed amendments to the League's legislative agenda, to guide his work with the recently convened 106<sup>th</sup> Congress.

(8) The ARRL staff was directed to recommend to Section Managers, Section Emergency Coordinators, and ARES groups that they enter into special agreements (MOUs), and conduct drills, with public utilities and public safety agencies for the provision of emergency communications should regular communication systems be disrupted by potential problems such as Y2K.

(9) VP Joel Harrison, W5ZN, as Chairman of the Enforcement Task Force jubilantly commented that strategies to gain more FCC enforcement action have begun to bear fruit: Changes in the administration and staffing at FCC have resulted in a reprioritization of enforcement. Mr. Harrison reviewed recent FCC enforcement actions and warnings.

(10) The Board voted that the following resolution is adopted:

WHEREAS, the ARRL was originally named when message handling by radio relay was an innovative and growing activity of amateur radio operators; and

WHEREAS, the breadth of amateur radio activities is adequately characterized no longer by our name; and

WHEREAS, it is important that the name of this organization clearly reflect our focus and purpose—Amateur Radio—to those both inside and outside our organization; and

WHEREAS, we are about to enter a new millennium; and

WHEREAS, the year 2000 is a natural point for change;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Committee is tasked with developing a name change proposal for consideration by the Board at the 1999 Second Meeting.

(11) It was voted by the Board to establish an "Amateur Radio Technology Task Force". The Amateur Radio Technology Task Force will be responsible for, among other related things, developing a strategy and plan of work exploring new technologies, assessing their applicability to amateur radio and also developing a plan as to how to incorporate such new technology in the amateur radio service. The Technology Task Force will be appointed by the President and consist of such members of the ARRL Board of Directors or Officers, ARRL HQ staff and League members who have been actively involved in experimenting with or developing new technologies that may have some applicability to the amateur radio service.

The Technology Task Force may, from time to time, bring proposals to the Board of Directors to further the development and implementation of such new technologies in amateur radio. The Technology Task Force may meet with other amateur radio organizations involved in experimental work or developing new technologies for the purpose of exploring joint sponsorship of research and/or development. The task force shall report to the Board at the 2000 Annual Meeting regarding the progress of its work.

The Future Systems Committee was reconstituted as the Amateur Radio Technology Working Group. The Technology Working Group shall conduct such experiments, research and development regarding newer technologies as requested by the Technology Task Force. The Technology Working Group shall consist of such persons appointed by the President and who are knowledgeable about newer technologies or experimenting with or developing such technologies as may be incorporated into the amateur radio service.



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## New gadgets and gizmos galore at the 1999 version of the INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

*"The Internet really promises to connect everyone to everything," said John Chambers, president and CEO of Cisco Systems, Inc. "Eventually all data, voice and video services will be delivered over an open Internet network, changing telecommunications forever. Like the Industrial Revolution 200 years ago, the Internet will reshape the fortunes of companies, countries and people."*

Attendees and exhibitors called the 1999 International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) held in Las Vegas between January 7 and 10 at the Las Vegas Convention Center the biggest and best show ever, reflecting the growth and technological innovation of an industry in the midst of a digital revolution. In its 32nd year, CES is the world's largest annual showcase of electronic consumer technology.

Produced by the Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association (CEMA), the 1999 CES featured more than 1,800 companies exhibiting in more than one million square feet of space. Final attendance numbers also increased significantly at 97,334, up 6.5% over last year. It was "digital everything!" Analog technology was basically a "no show."

The keynote speakers were Howard Stringer, chairman and CEO, Sony Corp. of America, Microsoft's Senior Vice President of Consumer Strategy Craig Mundie, John Chambers, president and CEO, Cisco Systems Inc. and Edward Zander, corporate executive officer, Sun Microsystems. David Coursey, technology writer and publisher of coursey.com also told about the hottest consumer electronics products with business applications.

### Some of the new high tech stuff that was introduced

■ **Among the hot subjects was the increasing importance of DVD - the Digital Versatile Disc.** 1998 sales of DVD movies increased 240% to \$170 million. National newspaper USA TODAY ran a story the first day of the show headlined "With Lower Prices, DVDs Catching On." The story noted that decreasing hardware prices, as well as technology advances, are helping all forms of DVD: DVD-Video, Divx and DVD-ROM - catch on with consumers. More than 1 million DVD-Video players were sold through to consumers in 1998 and there are currently about 2400 DVD titles to choose from, with more than 16,000 U.S. retailers offering DVD.

■ A start-up communications firm, **Command Audio** introduced an 'audio-on-demand' service from any location using a handheld device about the size of a television remote control. By using satellites and building a nationwide network of transmitters, subscribers can receive more than 100 programs, including radio, TV shows, and even print magazines. All can be listened to on demand, so if subscribers miss a show during its regularly scheduled air time, they can listen later. With an

FM transmitter built into the handheld unit, a customer can route the signal to their car, home, or office radio. Denver and Phoenix will be the first two cities to have the new service and Command Audio hopes to go national by the end of next year. The playback unit was developed by RCA, a division of Thomson Consumer Electronics. It will be sold and marketed by Thomson for \$199. A monthly subscription fee for the service is \$15.

■ **Low-cost high-performance flat speakers are on the way!** American Technology Corp. received a "CES Innovations '99 Award" from CEMA and the Electronics Industry Association for its patent pending SFT (Stratified Field Technology) ultra thin flat panel speaker technology that offers superior performance over conventional loudspeakers. The lightweight SFT speaker is totally non-magnetic and contains no crossover network, voice coil or other components found in traditional loudspeakers. SFT can be produced in a variety of sizes and shapes without the costly and exacting manufacturing process demanded of traditional high-end loudspeaker systems.

■ Another CES Innovations Award went to **Alcatel's Internet Screenphone: a compact telephone that with one touch of a button accesses the Internet.** It has a built-in keypad, a color VGA screen, a touch screen and a smart card reader for "...facilitating short transactions and frequent consultations of Internet content, as well as e-mail and voice communications." It will be available this Spring.

■ **Recordable DVD and DVD-Audio debuted at CES.** Pioneer demonstrated working models of both recordable DVD video and DVD-Audio. The prototype player holds 4.7 gigabytes of data ...enough to save a little more than two hours of video to the rewritable disc. Pioneer said they could have the product available within six months of finalization of a new rewritable standard.

Both Pioneer and Kenwood plan to release audio DVD players by the end of the year. Pioneer said that they would also have a new unit that combines DVD-Video and DVD-Audio in one player. Panasonic announced a new top-of-the-line DVD player that includes both Dolby Digital and Digital Theater Sound (DTS) decoders. Dolby Digital and DTS are two high-fidelity surround-sound audio formats that just a few years ago sold for between \$500 and \$1,500 each. Now, both are in a unit that will sell for \$599.

■ A major focus this year was on home networking. (17 million multiple-PC homes are expected by the year 2000.) **Symbol Technologies, Inc. demonstrated an integrated, wireless voice and data network for the home** using cable and ADSL modem technology from Cisco systems. The *Spectrum24* solution provides users with high-speed (1.2 Mbps) voice and data access to the



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Internet from anywhere in the home. Users can surf the Net or read their e-mail from the comfort of their backyard lounge, while they send a report to a printer located in the basement. Using Symbol's wireless *NetVision* voice-over-IP phones, multiple phone calls also can be made at the same time over the same network. Once high-speed Internet access is brought into the home, that capability is distributed to any location in or around the home, without tying the user to specific wired locations. Adapter cards located in laptops, printers or hand-held computers provide access to the network, allowing devices to share all network services, including file sharing, printing, Internet access and telephony. The coverage area of the wireless home network exceeds 20,000 sq. ft.

■ **According to CEMA, 13,176 Digital TVs have been sold to date.** The launch of Digital Television (DTV) broadcasts began on November 1. The DTV Supersession featured a panel of speakers from the broadcast and retail industries. The keynote address was presented by FCC Commissioner Susan Ness who spoke with enthusiasm about the successful launch of digital television, applauding the multi-industry effort that has made DTV a reality: "It has taken a collective effort to coordinate the DTV launch," Ness said. "It will continue to take cooperation to win the hearts and pocket books of consumers." Manufacturers said they believed that two thirds of digital sets sold in 1999 would be HDTV vs. standard definition digital sets.

■ **The Clarion AutoPC is the first personal computer designed for a car.** It combines software by Microsoft Corp. and voice-actuated hardware by Clarion Corp. of America (\$1,299). Along with operating the cellular phone and controlling music, the AutoPC will read your e-mail to you, record information like radio clips or telephone conversations, and provide turn-by-turn directions to a specific address or the nearest gas station, restaurant, hotel or bank. AutoPC recognizes 200 voice commands and is installed in the dash, taking the place and functions of the radio. During a demonstration at CES, the driver spoke these commands: "AutoPC, Radio, Preset, Two, Volume, Normal." The computer turned on the radio, tuned it to the No. 2 station on its preset list, and set the volume. The *Hansen Report on Automotive Electronics* estimates that by the year 2005 the worldwide market for in-vehicle, multimedia computers that rely on speech recognition will top \$1 billion. Clarion expects to sell more than 10,000 units in the United States this year.

■ **Second Digital Living Room Study Unveiled at CES** - As more and more consumers embrace the Internet, home life is quickly transforming into digital life, according to the results of the second *Digital Living Room Consumer Survey* released by Greenfield Online. Key findings in the report:

- More consumers say their lives are made easier by their personal computers (89%) and printers (85%) than by the TV remote control (78%).
- If consumers could choose between purchasing an interactive TV service or standard cable service, consumers overwhelmingly opted for interactive TV (62%) over standard cable (24%).
- Most consumers use their home computers for leisure activities, with only a small number using it for work (18%) or school work (8%).
- Most consumers home computers are in shared rooms of the home, such as the den, study, living room or the spare/guest bedroom. Only a small number of consumers have their home computer in a master bedroom (19%) and an even smaller number have them in a child's bedroom (9%).

■ **Lucent Technologies introduced a new Everest chip set that promises to dramatically lower costs of spread spectrum 900 MHz digital cordless phones** ...even into the \$50 range. The 900 MHz digital cordless phone market is expected to grow at an estimated 57 percent annual rate from this year through the year 2002, according to Forward Concepts, a DSP market research firm. The market is expected to expand from an estimated 4.4 million units in 1998 to 26.5 million units by the year 2002. "With Bell Labs' CLEAR-EFFECT® technology, the static, interference and eavesdropping headaches of today's analog cordless phones will be eliminated."

■ **Omnron Healthcare's new Body Logic (\$99) is the first hand-held body fat analyzer.** It determines body fat with the press of a button by using bioimpedance technology to measure your body's resistance to a weak electric current. Each reading takes just seven seconds, and the analyzer goes with you wherever you go. Body Logic is a one-pound battery-operated device roughly the size of a paperback book with two grips on either end. Because fat tissues have little or no electric conductivity, the analyzer determines the ratio of fat to other tissues. Body Logic calculates body fat based on each individual's height, weight, age and gender, displaying results both in pounds and percentage on a large digital panel. Each user's vital statistics can be programmed into the analyzer, using just three buttons on the center panel, for instant recall each time a measurement is taken. The unit's memory retains up to nine personal profiles to permit shared use.

■ **Never go to the post office for postage again!** Pitney Bowes demonstrated two new novel small office mail solutions at CES. *ClickStamp™* prints postage directly on envelopes using common PC laser or ink jet printers. Prepaid postage is stored in a Postage Vault (attached to the back of a PC) and can be refilled 24 hours a day via PC modem. ClickStamp also manages



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multiple address books, verifies addresses, imports/ exports mailing lists and integrates seamlessly with standard word processing and software packages. Currently in beta test, this product is expected to be approved by the *United States Postal Service* for nationwide use in 1999. *ClickStamp Online™* offers all the functionality of ClickStamp, but postage is downloaded instantly over the Internet as it's printed onto an envelope, rather than being held in a Postage Vault PC attachment. (Currently under review with the United States Postal Service.)

## ■ Personal "on demand" television is on the way!

The "Best of Show" is the highest form of recognition at CES. This year it went to *ReplayTV™* – a digital video time-shifting system from Replay Networks. It does for TV what a browser does for the Internet...let's you personalize, manage and view content when you want. You simply tell it to get shows on certain subjects or the ones you want and it digitally stores them in special Replay Channels. The Replay device uses a large capacity disc drive storage system similar to that found in personal computers. TV programming is compressed and recorded. You can select up to two weeks programming for later viewing. ReplayTV even allows you to pause shows you are watching which you can resume when you return. And you can get instant replays by just pressing a button. Replay Networks provides a free program listing service that viewers can use to find and schedule show recordings. This is based on a telephone connection that dials in on a nightly basis to download updated channel-guide information and software updates. Replay Networks has filed for over 120 patents on the system. One of the board members and big investors in the system is Marc Andreessen who "invented" the first Internet browser while in college. The cost starts at \$699. . Another company, TiVo Inc., a Sunnyvale, CA startup also showed what amounts to an intuitive VCR that scans TV channels for programs its owner might like, then records them in an easy-to-use format. Check out: <[www.replaytv.com](http://www.replaytv.com)> and <[www.tivo.com](http://www.tivo.com)>

■ Startup company, Security Data Networks, Inc., (SDN.NET) new inexpensive **Internet-based MicroSentinel® consumer security system captured another CES "Best of Show" award.** MicroSentinel features wireless cameras and motion detection software to let users monitor their family, home, or business from anywhere they have access to the Internet or e-mail. This \$699 system is used with any Windows personal computer. Unlike cable connected cameras, MicroSentinel supports up to four small 2.4 GHz wireless color video cameras with a range of up to 700 feet each. The software can detect motion, such as a person entering a room, then record images, audio, or video, and optionally dial a phone number (even a pager or cell phone) to notify users. It can also record at designated times. The recordings can be automatically sent to any e-mail address

or web site, saved on the computer to be viewed later, or posted to the SDN Security Server web site. Users can log onto the secure SDN Server from any Internet connection at any time to view days or weeks worth of recordings for a small monthly fee. In addition, while working at their computer, users can view live video of multiple activities such as the children with their nanny, pets in the backyard, or employees in the store or office. Even stay in touch with parents and grandparents with a few mouse clicks. (The optional SDN Security Server subscription runs from \$19.95 to \$49.95 per month.)

■ Eye care company, Bausch & Lomb introduced their new **PC Magni-Viewer™, an ergonomic tool that enlarges computer screen information by 175%.** It is the world's first acrylic optical lens personal computer magnification system designed to address the growing problem of eyestrain from extensive computer use.

The \$295, the PC Magni-Viewer magnification system sits underneath any 13", 15" or 17" PC monitor. A swivel-arm extends over the top of the monitor to an adjustable 6" X 8" acrylic optical lens that is suspended in front of the screen.

Depending upon placement, the image from the Magni-Viewer looks like it is 33 to 60 inches away from the user, much farther than the 18 to 24 inches typical for a VDT. With the PC Magni-Viewer, a 15-inch monitor provides a sharp image equivalent to a 40-inch monitor 3 feet away. Web site: <[www.bauschvision.com](http://www.bauschvision.com)>

■ **High Definition Television Gets Bigger** - Sony introduced its biggest and most advanced HDTV -- a 65-inch rear-projection, high-definition big screen television. The KWP-65HD1 displays high-definition images and offers a full slate of innovative digital technologies to enhance the viewing experience. These include a new high-definition MicroFocus™ CRT and lens system, high contrast screen with anti-reflective coating, HD video input and Auto Focus digital convergence system. The big screen TV will be available this spring for a suggested retail price of \$11,999.

■ Access Communications introduced the **Aplio/Phone, a standalone, smart Internet telephony appliance that re-routes calls to the Internet without a computer,** enabling users to dial long distance calls for free. Aplio/Phone is a full-featured telephony solution with patent-pending technology makes it simple to connect to other callers via telephone. With the press of one button, Aplio/Phone reroutes calls to the Internet, eliminating any per-minute long-distance charges, while ensuring superior audio quality, rivaling that of advanced digital cellular phones. In addition, the Aplio/Phone features a built-in processor and modem, Flash RAM, hardware-based full-duplex voice compression, and a full-duplex speaker phone that can be used even when the device is not connected to the Internet.